

# 1999 VEGETABLE, MELON, AND TARO HIGHLIGHTS

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## VEGETABLES AND MELONS

Total production of vegetables and melons for 1999 is estimated at 99.95 million pounds, up 7 percent from 1998. Vegetable and melon growers also posted gains in harvested acreage at 7,840 acres (up 25 percent) and in farm value at \$43 million (up 8 percent) during 1999.

Weather conditions improved from 1998, but remained generally dry in most areas. The only exception was the windward side of the Big Island which experienced very wet conditions for the first 4 months of 1999. For the most part, however, generally dry conditions were favorable for growth since most vegetables and melons were subject to irrigation.

Tomato growers topped all other vegetable and melons in 1999 with production estimated at a record high 16.8 million pounds, up 65 percent from 1998. A combination of increased harvested acreage and favorable weather helped produce the record-breaking tomato crop.

## TARO

Hawaii taro production is estimated at 6.8 million pounds for 1999, up 13 percent from 1998 and the highest total since 1995. The combined price for poi and Chinese taro averaged 53 cents per pound in 1999, unchanged from the record high achieved in 1998. The boost in production, combined with steady farm prices, enabled taro farmers to post farm revenues of \$3.6 million, up 13 percent from 1998 and a new record high.

Taro for processing totaled 6.5 million pounds in 1999, up 14 percent from 1998. The bulk of all processed taro is made into poi. In 1999, that amount totaled 6.2 million pounds, up 15 percent from 1998. Favorable weather, as well as the successful adoption of improved cultural practices that helped reduce the incidence of the Taro Pocket Rot disease, were the main reasons for the increase in production.

Fresh taro sales, comprised mainly of Chinese taro was estimated at 300,000 pounds in 1999, unchanged from 1998. Farm prices for Chinese taro increased 1 percent in 1999 to average 53.5 cents per pound.